

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY

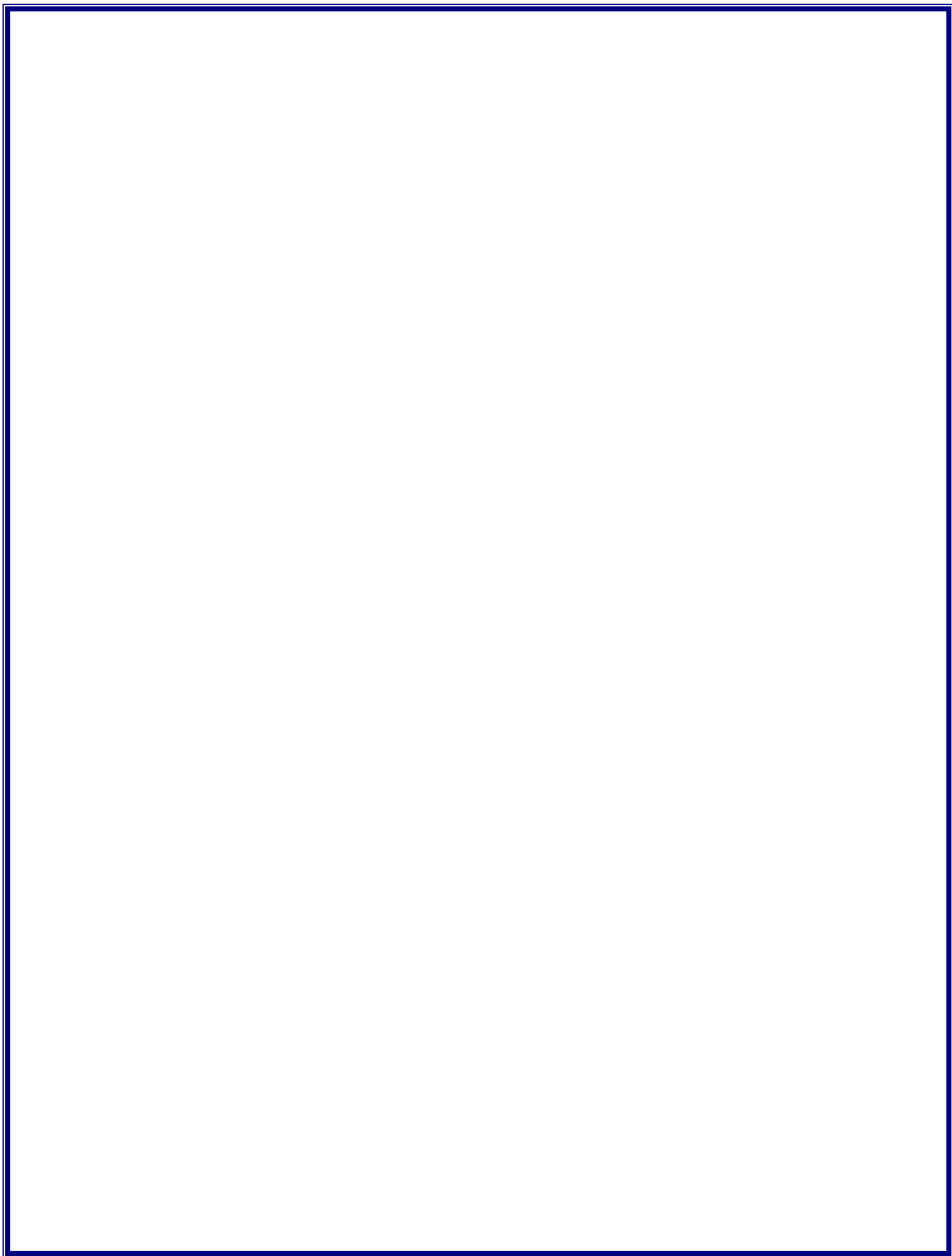


FINAL REPORT



City of Atlanta
Department of Planning and Community Development
Bureau of Planning

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Named for Atlanta's most famous and world-renowned Nobel Prize-winning resident, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive connects West Atlanta to Downtown. This heavily used east-west corridor links points of interest such as the Atlanta University Center, the Georgia Dome, the Georgia World Congress Center, and five MARTA rail stations. Stable suburban and historic urban neighborhoods line the corridor alongside notable parks such as Mozley Park and Adams Park and other community facilities such as the historic Booker T. Washington High School and the Adamsville Recreation Center. Specifically, the corridor passes through the following neighborhoods and Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's) as shown in Figure 1-1:

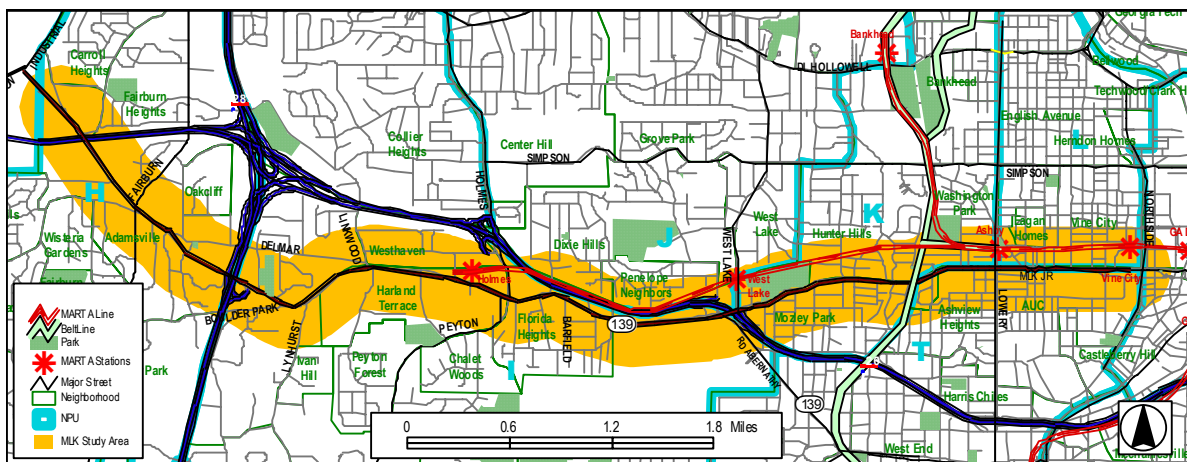
- Adamsville – NPU H
- Collier Heights, Westhaven and Harland Terrace – NPU I
- Florida Heights, Dixie Hills and West Lake – NPU J
- Mozley Park, Hunter Hills and Washington Park – NPU K
- Ashview Heights – NPU T
- Eagan Homes and Vine City – NPU L



Adamsville Community Center

The corridor crosses the proposed path of Atlanta's BeltLine, a proposed 22-mile loop of transit, trails and parks. The BeltLine intersects Martin Luther King (MLK), Jr. Drive near Washington Park. The corridor also parallels Interstate 20, the region's major east-west freeway and crosses Interstate 285, the region's perimeter freeway. At the intersection with Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard, MLK Jr. Drive becomes State Route 139 going westward past Westview Cemetery, through Adamsville and eventually to the Atlanta city limits and Fulton Industrial Boulevard. As such, MLK Jr. Drive performs as a key corridor within the City of Atlanta will maintain its major corridor status in the growth and development of West Atlanta.

Figure 1-1: MLK Jr. Drive Study Area, Neighborhoods and NPUs



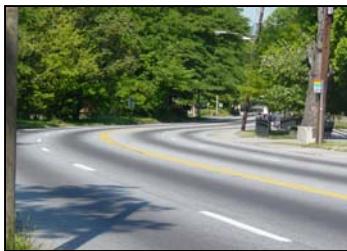
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Purpose of the Study

The MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study addresses mobility and accessibility issues along the 7.3-mile corridor, and develops strategies to stimulate the revitalization of the corridor. The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that:

1. Provide mobility throughout the entire corridor.
2. Incorporate a full range of multi-modal transportation options.
3. Are consistent with new regional transportation initiatives (MARTA West Line Extension, Bus Rapid Transit, etc.).
4. Are realistic, feasible and able to be implemented.
5. Encourage future development within the study area that maximizes use of public transportation and accomplishes broader redevelopment goals through the use of a transit-oriented development (TOD) concept (incorporating transit strategies from neighborhood studies adjacent to the corridor)



MLK Jr. Drive in Segment 2

The MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study identifies strategies that aim to enhance transportation, land use, economic development and urban design features along MLK Jr. Drive. For this corridor study, an efficient framework of transportation safety, connectivity and circulation is important in developing an optimal plan for future land use patterns and economic development to provide an enhanced quality of life for the corridor and community adjacent to the corridor.

Study Area

The study area, as shown in Figure 1-1, extends along the 7.3-mile corridor from its intersection with Northside Drive on the east to Fulton Industrial Boulevard and the city limits on the west. It includes properties one quarter of a mile on the north and south sides of the street.

Segments

The study team organized the corridor into three segments (*with three sub-segments for Segment 1*). Each is shown in Figure 1-2 and outlined and described below:

- Segment 1 – Fulton Industrial Boulevard to West Lake Avenue
 - A. Fulton Industrial Boulevard to Interstate 285
 - B. Interstate 285 to H.E. Holmes Drive
 - C. H.E. Holmes Drive to West Lake Avenue
- Segment 2 – West Lake Avenue to Lowery Boulevard
- Segment 3 – Lowery Boulevard to Northside Drive

Segment 1, the longest segment of the corridor, extends from Fulton Industrial Boulevard on the west to West Lake Avenue/Interstate 20 on the east and makes up approximately two-thirds of the corridor. The segment combines suburban commercial/retail, apartments, schools, offices,

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shopping centers and single-family residential areas. In addition, this section includes some of the highest income-producing households along the corridor. A majority of the corridor's commercial and retail uses can be found in this section.

Segment 2 extends from West Lake Avenue to Lowery Boulevard and consists primarily of stable neighborhoods with low-density residential, schools, parks and churches. The low-density single-family residential land use dominates this segment. It includes minimal multi-family, commercial uses and mixed uses.

Segment 3 extends from Lowery Boulevard to Northside Drive and consists of an urban mixture of commercial and residential uses that serve the Atlanta University Center and other surrounding job centers.

Activity Nodes

The study identified eight existing or potential activity nodes along the corridor. These activity nodes became a major organizing principle for the development recommendations. The recommendations concentrate new development into these activity nodes with mixed-use, mixed-income, pedestrian-friendly development in order to address needs identified during the analysis of existing conditions and the community visioning process. *Section 3: Recommendations* outlines transportation, development opportunities, land use, zoning, and housing recommendations for each activity node (see map on following page). The eight activity nodes identified are as follows and mapped in Figure 1-2:

1. Fairburn Road
2. Proposed MARTA Station TOD
3. Lynhurst
4. Holmes Crossing
5. H.E. Holmes MARTA Station TOD
6. Westview Cemetery
7. West Lake MARTA Station TOD
8. Lowery Boulevard TOD



Ashby Station at Lowery activity node

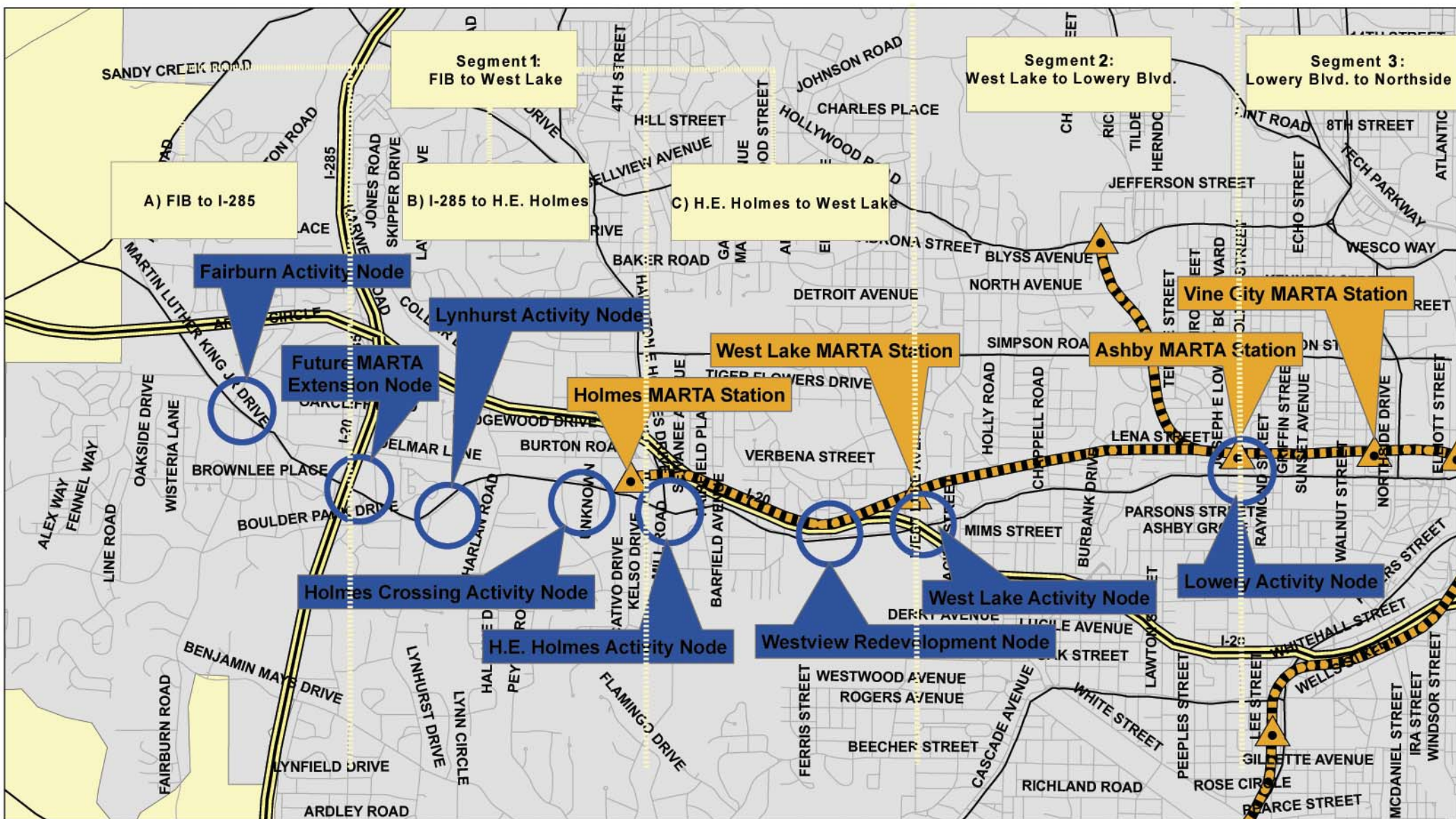


Figure 1-2: Corridor Segments and Activity Nodes

0 2 Miles



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Other Plans

The corridor study area, as described earlier in this section, includes four areas where the city and/or MARTA recently completed detailed studies. The city completed the *Northside Drive Corridor Transportation Study* in 2005. This study covered Northside Drive and included the intersection with MLK Jr. Drive. The city completed the *Vine City Master Plan* in 2004 that covers the north side of the MLK corridor from Northside Drive to Lowery Boulevard. The city completed the *H.E. Holmes Livable Centers Initiative Study* in 2002 that covers the corridor from Florida Avenue to Lynhurst Drive. MARTA completed the West Line Extension Study in 2004 as well. This study recommended the location of the new West Line station for the northeast corner of the intersection of Interstate 285 and MLK Jr. Drive in addition to proposing a Bus Rapid Transit line that would share the Interstate 20 right of way from the Holmes MARTA Station to Fulton Industrial Boulevard.

The MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study did not seek to alter these previously approved plans, but instead planned with their recommendations in mind. Figure 5-27 in *Section 5: Existing Conditions* maps the study area boundaries of these studies.



Participation at Kick-off Meeting

Public Involvement Process

The public participation process consisted of a 13-month period of activities that included stakeholder surveys, advisory committee meetings, public meetings, a project website, and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders starting in September 2004 and ending in October 2005.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee, through participation at eight meetings, helped guide the process by serving as liaisons to the MLK Jr. Drive Corridor community for the study team. The Advisory Committee included residents, Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) representatives, business owners, property owners, local advocacy group representatives and advocates for the interests of environmental justice populations (e.g. minority, low-income, elderly and disabled) in order to represent the corridor's diverse interests. The study team made a special effort to include single-family and multi-family residents.

Stakeholder Interviews

The study team conducted one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders during the first stage of the study. Those interviewed represent a broad and diverse set of community interests and priorities and included:

- Elected or appointed officials representing constituents in the study area
- Merchants associations and chambers of commerce
- NPU representatives
- Neighborhood and civic associations

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- Individuals representing a cross-section of opinion and perspectives in the community at-large
- Advocates for the interests of environmental justice populations (e.g., minority, low-income, elderly, and disabled)

Section 7: Public Involvement and meeting summaries found in the appendix provide detailed reports of the public participation process. It will discuss methods for advertising and logistics for facilitating the meetings.

Public Meetings

The study team conducted a total of **six** public meetings attended by more than **250** community stakeholders. The team held meetings at various locations along the corridor that focused on specific small areas in addition to meetings held at the Adamsville Recreation Center where the community stakeholders focused on the entire corridor. These meetings resulted in a clearly defined list of issues, a general public consensus on recommendations and implementation project priorities.

Web Site

The Bureau of Planning hosted a website for the study where the team posted documents and other information for the public to review. The website also provided a place to announce meetings and post presentations and other handouts presented and distributed at the public meetings. The website address is: <http://www.atlantaga.gov/mlk.aspx>.

Report Organization

This report provides an analysis of the MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study, recommendations that outline projects and other improvements, the methodology used to complete the analysis, a description of how the community stakeholders participated throughout the planning process and the results of the analysis. This report is organized as follows:

- *Section 1: Introduction* - the purpose of the study, study area, etc.
- *Section 2: Community Goals and Objectives* – outlines the goals and objectives of the study and how they led the study process.
- *Section 3: Recommendations* - overview of the recommendations and strategies created as a result of the study and the analysis conducted.
- *Section 4: Implementation and Action Plan*– outlines the implementation strategy and details the proposed action plan and project listing.
- *Section 5: Existing Conditions*– analysis of the existing demographics, land use, transportation, housing and design characteristics of the study area.
- *Section 6: Planning Methodology* –assessment of the methodology that was used for the planning process.
- *Section 7: Public Participation* - details the public participation process
- *Appendix*: Includes additional documentation for Existing Conditions, Methodology, Public Participation and Market Analysis.

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SECTION 2: COMMUNITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A key visioning component for the MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study was the coordination with and feedback from the local community. This coordination provided opportunities for a reciprocal visioning process that allowed for the assessment of the initial strengths, weaknesses and attitudes of the local community. The study team processed the comments/feedback and used them in the preliminary goals and objectives development process.

The study developed goals and objectives through a collaborative approach that involved the study team, community stakeholders, city staff, and Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU). As discussed in Section 6: *Planning Methodology*, the study team embraced the goals the community stakeholders had identified through previous planning processes, including NPU goals developed for the city's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The goals and objectives listed below are consistent with and support the previously developed goals described above:

Goals

- Promote safe and secure public services and facilities for an enhanced quality of life
- Develop scenarios to improve the transportation issues in the corridor
- Develop an appropriate mix of land use and zoning to meet the needs of the community
- Create and maintain an economic base that ensures the stability of neighborhoods and the preservation of the community's character
- Preserve and enhance the historic residential and commercial areas
- Develop strategies consistent with new transportation initiatives from regional agencies
- Increase the amount of multi-modal transportation options along the corridor
- Protect any environmentally sensitive and greenspace/conservation areas along the corridor
- Coordination with and consideration of the goals and recommendations of other plans and studies in the corridor

Objectives

- Secure commercial and industrial zonings for strategic corridors and properties with business development potential
- Match available facilities and land with targeted business sectors to ensure they have the necessary infrastructure and amenities
- Have the certain parcels properly zoned for future development/redevelopment
- Promote the maintenance and improvement of the Livable Centers initiatives
- Diversify the business mix and target higher quality jobs to strengthen the local economy
- Provide a balanced distribution of regional and community commercial and mixed-use office centers.
- Moderate the spread of strip commercial development along the corridor
- Promote the maintenance and improvement of the Livable Centers initiatives.
- Establish regulations which allow for an adequate supply of affordable priced housing where appropriate

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- Ensure the availability of cultural and recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages, abilities, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Strive for expanded code enforcement and building inspection as well as timely, improved response to enforcement requests
- Establish high building standards to insure quality workmanship and construction for housing along the corridor

Figure 2-1 below illustrates the consistency among the MLK Jr. Drive Corridor Transportation Study's goals and objectives and those of the community stakeholders. Each NPU develops multiple goals and objectives each year for the CDP. NPU goals and objectives explicitly related to the study goals were marked with an x in the matrix. If a goal or objective is not marked with an x, it does not mean that the NPU goals are inconsistent with a particular study goal, but rather have no effect on the goals.

Figure 2-1: Goals and Objectives – Study and NPUs

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div> Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Corridor Study Goals and Objectives Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) </div> </div>						
	H	I	J	K	L	
Goals						
Promote safety and security for an enhanced quality of life	x	x	x	x	x	
Increase the amount of multi-modal options	x	x	x	x	x	
Develop an appropriate mix of land use and zoning to meet community needs	x			x		
Improve the transportation issues/concerns	x	x	x	x	x	
Create and maintain an economic base that ensures stability	x	x	x	x	x	
Preserve and enhance the historic residential and commercial areas	x	x	x	x		
Encourage mixed-use development around MARTA stations		x	x	x	x	
Develop strategies consistent with regional agencies						
Protect and preserve any environmentally sensitive and greenspace/conservation areas	x	x				
Coordination with and consideration of the recommendations of other plans and studies	x	x	x	x	x	
Objectives						
Diversify the business mix and target higher quality employers along the corridor	x		x			
Moderate the spread of strip commercial development along the corridor	x	x	x		x	
Establish regulations that allow for affordable housing in appropriate areas			x			
Ensure the availability of cultural and recreational opportunities for all groups		x		x		
Have certain parcels properly zoned for future development/ redevelopment				x	x	
Improve transportation safety and congestion at intersections	x	x	x	x	x	
Enhance neighborhood/community connectivity				x	x	
Improve transit accessibility, service and options		x	x	x	x	
Increase non-vehicular options	x	x	x	x	x	
Minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive areas	x		x			